



LANGUAGE POLICY STATEMENT

APPROVED BY THE NATIONAL BOARD FEBRUARY 24, 1979

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF YMCAs OF CANADA
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LANGUAGE POLICY STATEMENT

A. PREAMBLE

The Statement of Purpose of the National Council of YMCAs of Canada is as follows:

The Young Men's Christian Association is a worldwide fellowship, dedicated to the growth of persons in spirit, mind and body, and in a sense of responsibility to each other and to the human community.

Adopted May 24, 1970 - "The York Basis"

This was the latest adaptation to the formal Statement of Purpose since the founding of the YMCA in Canada in 1851 and is the broadest and most inclusive Statement of Purpose. This revision stemmed from major debate at the 1968 National YMCA Conference where it was agreed that the YMCA in Canada should become more inclusive in its leadership and in the people served.

A particular desire was expressed that the Association should become truly ecumenical in nature where Canadians of all faiths could feel at home. It was apparent that a reworded Statement of Purpose was needed to encourage fuller participation by women and youth and by French-speaking Canadians.

In practice, National Council has fallen behind the reality of the Canadian YMCA today. This was recognized as early as 1976 at the "En Route '76" Conference when the following resolution, subsequently approved by the National Council, was overwhelmingly endorsed:

In support of the Canadian National Council's
commitment to the linguistic realities of our
Movement,

BE IT RESOLVED THAT we strongly support and
recommend a continued effort to provide services
and communications bilingually where requested
or necessary.

Since 1976 the demands for such services and communications have increased dramatically. The encouraging success of some YMCAs and YM-YWCAs in serving both official language groups within their communities now has national implications. The National Council has the challenge of serving our entire membership with equal quality. This necessitates, by the very nature of our Canadian constituency, increased capacity in the two official languages.

Some Associations have already approved policy statements, setting out targets to increase their capacity to serve in both languages.

Currently there are 16 Associations across Canada serving communities where there are significant numbers of French-speaking Canadians. These Associations will be assisted through this Policy to increase their capability to serve in both languages.

B. GOALS OF THE LANGUAGE POLICY

1. To reflect at the National level the official linguistic realities of the Canadian nation and the YMCA federation.
2. To service the YMCA federation in both official languages.

C. OBJECTIVES OF THE LANGUAGE POLICY

1. To ensure that both the Toronto and Ottawa offices have the ability to represent the National Council in both official languages. Such a representation will require as a minimum that within each office there will be a member of the professional staff and the appropriate support staff who can effectively communicate in whatever official language may be the minority.

Present capabilities in this regard must be maintained and through the process of attrition and language training the above minimum position is to be attained no later than June 1982.

2. To ensure that the materials and publications of the National Council reflect the linguistic realities of the YMCA federation, wherever physically feasible all materials (crests, booklets, letterheads, posters, etc.,) will be of a bilingual nature.

YMCA publications will support this language policy ensuring that the required publications and information are readily available in both official languages.

By June 1980 unilingual National Council materials will be the exception and this position is to be attained by the gradual replacement of present materials.

By June 1980 all public information will be released in both languages and technical publications will be available in both languages on order.

3. Associations and/or YMCA service-delivery-networks operating National projects or training events must, by June 1980, have the capacity to serve constituents in both official languages. (See National Linguistics Centre).

Language principles for National projects will include:

- a) Written materials available in both languages.
- b) Questionnaires, reports will be produced in both languages.
- c) Training events, trips, etc., will have bilingual capacity in the leadership team where participants from both language groups are involved.
- d) Planning and Management groups will have adequate representation from Associations operating in communities with significant involvement with official linguistic materials.
- e) The National Council will provide all possible support to Associations with significant official language minority communities to ensure that the committees, the Board and the Council increasingly reflect the linguistic duality of the YMCA federation.

Materials for such bodies will be presented in both languages no later than June 1980.

When appropriate, translation facilities will be made available to the above bodies.

- f) The National Council, in order to ensure that its members are acquainted with and sensitive to the linguistic and cultural realities within both the YMCA federation and Canada, will conduct an annual orientation program. This program will involve volunteer leaders at the National level and senior members of the staffs of the Associations.

D. NATIONAL YMCA LINGUISTICS CENTRE

The National Council will establish a National YMCA Linguistics Centre through a contractual arrangement with an Association.

The four major functions of the Centre will be:

- i) language training for staff members;
- ii) translation of materials;
- iii) conducting orientation activities for National Council leaders;
- iv) support and encouragement to Associations to provide services in both languages, where appropriate.

The Linguistics Centre will also develop a standard lexicon for technical YMCA terms to promote consistency and uniformity in the use of nomenclature throughout the YMCA federation.

A National Co-ordinator will be named to the Centre to implement this Policy and to provide assistance to Associations in their planning to better serve their total communities.